

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 L-03 SS-15 ACDA-12
SOE-02 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00
EB-08 H-01 INR-10 INT-05 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01
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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3042
INFO AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USDOE WASHINGTON
USDOE GERMANTOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 3016

USIAEA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, MNUC, ENRG, TECH, INFCE, AS
SUBJECT: US MODEL SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT - NEGOTIATION OF
BILATERAL AGREEMENT WITH AUSTRALIA

REF: STATE 93306

SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH COORDINATED GOA DISSECTION OF US "MODEL
SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT" HAS NOT BEEN COMPLETED, PRELIMINARY GOA
REACTION IS ONE OF SATISFACTION. IN PRINCIPLE, GOA WOULD BE
PREPARED TO CONSIDER COMPLETION OF A BILATERAL US/AUSTRALIA
AGREEMENT "SOONER RATHER THAN LATER", AND WONDERS WHETHER
THE US COULD GEAR ITSELF UP TO FORMAL EXCHANGES BEGINNING IN
MID-JUNE. END SUMMARY

1. ROY FERNANDEZ (FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY, NUCLEAR AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF FOREIGN OFFICE AND CHAIRMAN OF GOA INTER-AGENCY
NUCLEAR TASK FORCE) GAVE EMBOFF PRELIMINARY GOA REACTIONS TO
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US "MODEL SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT" (REFTEL). FERNANDEZ
SAID GOA WAS HIGHLY PLEASED WITH THE US MODEL AGREEMENT,
AND ALTHOUGH GOA EXPERTS HAD NOT YET FINISHED DISSECTING
IT, HE SAW NO SUBSTANTIVE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE US
AND AUSTRALIAN APPROACH TO SAFEGUARDS PROBLEM. "THE
LAWYERS WILL WANT THEIR SAY" (IMPLYING THAT ONE SOMEHOW
NEEDED TO TAKE CARE OF OTHERWISE HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT

RATES IN THAT PROCESSION), BUT FERNANDEZ THOUGHT WE COULD PROBABLY REACH AGREEMENT RELATIVELY EASILY.

2. FERNANDEZ SAW SOME ADVANTAGE TO CONDUCTING US/AUSTRALIA DISCUSSIONS SOONER RATHER THAN LATER, BOTH BECAUSE THE GOA WOULD IN PRINCIPLE LIKE TO HAVE A SATISFACTORY SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT CODIFIED BEFORE IT REACHES A CRUNCH POINT WITH AUSTRALIAN UNIONS AS THIS COUNTRY PROCEEDS TO OPEN UP ITS URANIUM DEPOSITS, AND BECAUSE IT BELIEVES (SINCE IT SHARES THE US VIEW ON THE NEED FOR A STRONG SAFEGUARDS REGIME) THAT THERE IS SOME VIRTUE IN SIGNING A STRONG BILATERAL AGREEMENT WHICH CAN THEN BE USED AS A PRECEDENT FOR SUBSEQUENT AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES WHOSE COMMITMENTS TO STRONG SAFEGUARDS ARE NOT SO GREAT AS OURS.

3. FERNANDEZ WONDERED WHETHER, IN PRINCIPLE, THE US WOULD BE PREPARED TO ENGAGE IN BILATERAL EXCHANGES BEGINNING IN MID-JUNE. HE THOUGHT MUCH OF THE EARLY WORK COULD PROBABLY SIMPLY BE TRANSACTED THROUGH US EMBASSY CANBERRA (ACTING AS A POSTMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT), BUT IF SOME ISSUES PROVED SUFFICIENTLY THORNY, IT MIGHT BE WORTH THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S SENDING AN EXPERT OR TWO FROM WASHINGTON TO HELP RESOLVE PROBLEMS BEFORE SIGNATURE. FERNANDEZ IMPLIED THAT THE GOA WOULD NOT WELCOME BEING CONFRONTED WITH A TEAM OF EXPERTS FROM WASHINGTON EARLY IN THE INITIAL STAGES OF THE US/AUSTRALIAN EXHANGES, FOR TO DO SO WOULD SWAMP
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THE GOA'S RESOURCES.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: AN INDICATION OF WHETHER DEPARTMENT CONCURS WITH IDEA OF REACHING BILATERAL AGREEMENT WITH AUSTRALIA "SOONER RATHER THAN LATER"; WHETHER DEPARTMENT WOULD BE WILLING TO SEE BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH AUSTRALIA BEGIN AROUND MID-JUNE; AND WHETHER, AFTER EARLY COBWEBS HAVE BEEN SWEEPED AWAY, THE DEPARTMENT WOULD BE PREPARED TO FIELD A MODEST-SIZED TEAM OF EXPERTS TO WRAP UP ALL THE DETAILS.
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